

at any rate, it left his conscience, his religion, his sociological ideas, the deeper problems which concern his relation to the universe, the subtler secrets of the world in which he lives, untouched." <sup>1</sup> That means that it was a fad and was insincere.

There were men who were great scholars within the standards of humanism, but the enthusiasm for art, the zeal for Latin and Greek literature, the cooperative struggle for exhumations and specimens, were features of a reigning fad. The Renaissance was an affair of the upper and middle classes. It never could spread to the masses. Classical learning came to be valued as a caste mark. Then it became still more truly an affectation, and was tainted with untruth. The masses were superior in the sincerity and truthfulness of their mores by the contrast. The humanists were pagan and profane, but did not follow their doctrines into a reformation of the church. They exaggerated the knowledge of the ancients and the prestige of classical opinion until it seemed to them that anything ancient must be true and authoritative. They transferred to what was ancient the irrational reverence which had been paid to the doctrines of the church, and paid to the great classical authors the respect which had been paid to saints.<sup>2</sup> In the sixteenth century they fell into discredit for their haughtiness, their shameful dissipation, and for their unbelief.<sup>3</sup>

721. The humanists. The humanists of Italy are a class by themselves, without historical relations. They had no trade or profession and could make no recognized career. Their controversies had a large personal element. They sought to exter-

minate each other. Three excuses have been suggested for them. The excessive petting and spoiling they met with when luck favored them; the lack of a guarantee for their physical circumstances, which depended on the caprice of patrons and the malice of rivals; and the delusive influence of antiquity, or of their notions about it. The last destroyed their Christian morality without giving them a substitute. Their careers were such generally that only the strongest moral natures could

<sup>1</sup> Symonds, *Catholic Reaction*, II, 137.

<sup>2</sup> Burckhardt, 184.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.